NABARD as a policy has included small and micro irrigation as one of the thrust areas for the year 2009-10. Further, consequent upon Government of India declaring 299 districts spread across 12 States as drought affected (based on the rainfall data provided by India Meteorological Department), NABARD has issued instructions dated 2 September, 2009 on Drought Relief Measures by Banks, to its Regional Offices advising them, *inter alia*, that they may call upon State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (SCARDBs) to finance water saving devices and support water conservation measures (Drip, Sprinkler system of irrigation) so as to minimize the impact of drought on rural people and economy.

Tax disputes of foreign companies

2823. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI N. K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has decided to set up panels to settle tax disputes of foreign companies operating in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of tax disputes of foreign companies operating in India which are pending for settlement;

(d) whether procedure and rules have been framed to reduce the impact of judgmental errors in determining transfer price in international transactions; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government has decided to set up Dispute Resolution Panels for settlement of tax disputes of foreign companies operating in India in the following cities; Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

(c) 1398 cases of foreign companies operating in India are pending before appellate authorities. Tax revenue involved in such cases is about Rs. 7325 crores.

(d) and (e) The income-tax (Dispute Resolution Panel) Rules, 2009 have been notified *vide* S.O. 2958 (E) dated 20th November, 2009 to regulate the procedure of the Dispute Resolution Panel.

NPAs of Banks

2824. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) of Public Sector Banks have risen to Rs. 44,000 crores till March, 2009 despite the fact that last year (2008) Government had waived off a large portion of such bad loans through Agricultural Loan Waiver Scheme;